

Table 1. Total number of pounds and value of blue crabs landed from the Pamlico River and Pamlico Sound, N.C. (1982-1989). Unpublished data from National Marine Fisheries Service, Division of Fishery Statistics. (Data in millions)

		YEAR					
		1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987

Pamlico River							
Pounds		3.4	3.8	5.1	3.5	2.2	1.7
Value		\$0.63	\$0.9	\$1.1	\$0.62	\$0.65	\$0.4
Pamlico Sound							
Pounds		18.3	15.0	14.4	11.6	7.8	14.5
Value		\$3.4	\$3.7	\$2.8	\$2.4	\$1.8	\$3.3
		YEAR					
		1988	1989				

Pamlico River							
Pounds		2.5	1.8				
Value		\$0.60	\$0.5				
Pamlico Sound							
Pounds		17.1	15.9				
Value		\$5.2	\$3.9				

chitin-rich procuticle to chitinoclastic bacteria (Cipriani et al 1980). Yet again, the question remains as to why these bacteria rarely attack crabs in healthy environments. Bacteria are common epibionts of crustaceans. Yet in natural or unstressed environments, they cause little or no harm (Johnson 1983).

Shell disease is considered contagious (Johnson 1983) and normal animals placed in impoundments with diseased ones are likely to acquire the condition. Yet most attempts to transmit the disease, other than placing normal animals with diseased ones, have had equivocal results or have met with failure (Johnson 1983). The few successful experimental infections have usually required abrading the cuticle in combination with the